



**National Center for Education Statistics (NCES)**

**School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) 2018  
Cognitive Interviews 2016**

**Appendix G  
SSOCS Communication Materials to be Cognitively Tested**

**OMB #1850-0803 v.171**

**September 2016**



**SSOCS-12(L)  
(12-2015)**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION SCIENCES

NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION STATISTICS



**SSOCS is endorsed by:**

- American Association of School Administrators
- American Federation of Teachers
- American School Counselors Association
- Association for Middle Level Education
- Association of American Educators
- Council of Chief State School Officers
- Education Northwest
- National Association of State Boards of Education
- National Association of Elementary School Principals
- National Association of School Resource Officers
- National Association of Secondary School Principals
- National PTA
- National School Safety Center
- School Safety Advocacy Council
- UCLA Center for Mental Health in Schools
- National Association of School Psychologists
- School Social Work Association of America

**Data collected by:**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
Economics and Statistics Administration  
U.S. CENSUS BUREAU

**Study conducted by:**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION  
STATISTICS

Dear

I am writing to invite you to participate in the 2016 School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS). Data collection for this survey is being carried out by the U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education. SSOCS is a recurring survey that focuses on the frequency of crime and violence in public schools and the programs and practices schools have developed to provide a safe school environment. It provides a unique opportunity to collect national data on crime and safety from the school's perspective. **SSOCS is the only survey of its kind.**

**Your response is critical to the success of this study** because your school is one of only a small number invited to participate in SSOCS. Your school represents hundreds of similar schools nationwide. Your involvement will only require the completion of a questionnaire. The person most knowledgeable about school crime and school policies to provide a safe environment should complete this survey.

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA; 20 U.S.C., § 9543). Your answers may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating districts, schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

**The U.S. Census Bureau will be sending the SSOCS questionnaire to your school next week.** If you have any general questions about the study, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-888-595-1332. Someone will be available to take your call Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). The U.S. Census Bureau is also available to answer your questions via e-mail at [addp.education.surveys@census.gov](mailto:addp.education.surveys@census.gov).

Thank you for giving this matter your attention. We look forward to your school's participation in this important data collection effort.

Sincerely,

Peggy G. Carr  
Acting Commissioner  
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosures



**SSOCS-13(L)**  
**(12-2015)**

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**Study conducted by:**

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
NATIONAL CENTER FOR EDUCATION  
STATISTICS

Dear

Last week, I wrote to request your participation in the School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS), an important national study that collects information about crime and safety in public schools. Data collection for this survey is being carried out by the U.S. Census Bureau on behalf of the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) of the U.S. Department of Education.

As we mentioned in our previous letter, SSOCS provides a unique opportunity to collect national data on crime and safety from the school's perspective. We are confident that, with your participation, we can provide data to state and federal agencies about various types of crime and discipline that exist in schools today. Although SSOCS may ask some questions that appear similar to those on other surveys, this survey is not connected to any other state or federal data collection system. **SSOCS is unique in that it provides national estimates of school crime and safety using common definitions across all states.**

NCES is authorized to conduct this survey by the Education Sciences Reform Act of 2002 (ESRA; 20 U.S.C., § 9543). We realize that data on school crime are highly sensitive, so we want to remind you that information provided as part of this study may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed, or used, in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S.C., § 9573). Reports of the findings from the survey will not identify participating districts, schools, or staff. Individual responses will be combined with those from other participants to produce summary statistics and reports.

While your participation in this survey is voluntary and your decision will not affect any benefits or funding you receive from the U.S. Department of Education, we do hope that you will participate in this important national survey.

**We would appreciate the return of the questionnaire within two weeks.** A postage-paid return envelope has been enclosed for your convenience. If you have any general questions about the study, please contact the U.S. Census Bureau at 1-888-595-1332. Someone will be available to take your call Monday through Friday, between 8:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. (Eastern Time). The U.S. Census Bureau is also available to answer your questions via e-mail at [adep.education.surveys@census.gov](mailto:adep.education.surveys@census.gov).

Sincerely,

Peggy G. Carr  
Acting Commissioner  
National Center for Education Statistics

Enclosures

WASHINGTON, DC 20202



## Do individual school data remain confidential?

Your answers may be used only for statistical purposes and may not be disclosed or used in identifiable form for any other purpose except as required by law (20 U.S. Code, Section 9573). Your answers will be combined with those from others to produce summary statistics and reports. No individual data such as names or addresses will be reported. Any attempt on the part of a data user to identify a school or a specific respondent is prohibited by law and punishable with a fine of up to \$250,000 and/or a prison term up to 5 years.

## Where can I find more information about the SSOCS?

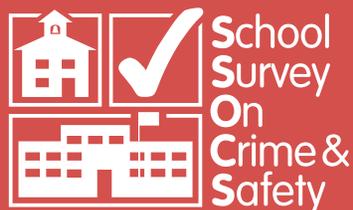
To see reports, publications, and other information on the SSOCS, please visit the SSOCS website at <http://nces.ed.gov/surveys/SSOCS>.

## Resources

- ★ For helpful tips on emergency planning: <http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/oesel/ohs/news.html>
- ★ For more information on the prevention of bullying: <http://www.stopbullying.gov>
- ★ For important school safety resources: <http://nij.gov/topics/crime/school-crime>
- ★ More school safety resources: <http://www.cdc.gov/features/safeschools>



# The School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS)



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[ies.ed.gov](http://ies.ed.gov)





## What is the School Survey on Crime and Safety?

The School Survey on Crime and Safety (SSOCS) is a national survey of elementary and secondary public school principals that collects information on school safety, including the frequency of school crime and violence, disciplinary actions, and school practices related to the prevention and reduction of crime. SSOCS is one of the nation's primary sources of school-level data on crime and safety. Sponsored by the U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES), it has been administered five times since 1999 to nationally representative samples of schools and will be conducted again in the spring of the 2015–16 school year. Your school has been selected to participate in this new wave of data collection.

## Why is the SSOCS important?

To address school crime, parents, school staff, and policymakers must understand the extent and nature of the problem. SSOCS is designed to provide measures of crime and safety in the nation's public schools. Some findings from the most recent collection done in the 2009–10 school year:

- ★ During the 2009–10 school year, the rate of violent incidents per 1,000 students was higher in middle schools (40 incidents) than in primary schools or high schools (21 incidents each).
- ★ Some 25 percent of schools reported at least one incident of the distribution, possession, or use of illegal drugs, a higher percentage than that of the distribution, possession, or use of alcohol (14 percent of schools) or prescription drugs (12 percent of schools).
- ★ A higher percentage of middle schools reported that student bullying occurred at school daily or at least once a week (39 percent) than did high schools or primary schools (20 percent each).



## What topics are covered in the questionnaire?

- ★ School policies and programs concerning crime and safety;
- ★ Student and teacher involvement in efforts to prevent or reduce school violence;
- ★ Frequency and types of disciplinary actions such as expulsions, transfers, and suspensions for selected offenses;
- ★ Frequency and types of crimes at school, including rape, sexual battery, physical attack, robbery, theft, and vandalism;
- ★ Student access to mental health services; and
- ★ Responsibilities of sworn law enforcement officers and SROs.

## Why was my school selected?

There are more than 80,000 public schools in the United States and only a small proportion are surveyed at one time. Your school was selected to represent schools similar to yours from across the nation. Your participation is important so that the results represent the diversity of America's public schools.